

When Children Walked the Earth

Chapter 3

Reconstructing Marriage

Up until now Civilization is the story of Children walking the earth guided by a few father-leaders. This is the analogy most often used to justify the control governments have of their citizens. It is not an unbiblical analogy and therefore I am comfortable with it because when you understand Biblical parenting you will understand that adult children with self-governing freedom under God's law is the goal of the family and therefore it should be the goal of any other government.

Growing up is inevitable for the family . . . however ethical judicial maturity is not inevitable. In state and church it rarely happens, when it does those few are recruited to lead. But that is exactly why Jesus said not to use the gentile governments of the world as our pattern he did not want a few leading and the rest following. And that is why the family is both an apt model for government before Christ, as well as for government after Christ but for quite different reasons.

For the family, the purpose of any control the parents have is to produce self-governing adults who do not need their parents to control their life as if childhood was inescapable. That too should be the purpose of any other government's authority or power even though before Christ it is a dimension left out of the analogy. The power of absolute control was the obsession before Christ.

The argument I have made so far in the first two chapters is that the rebellion of those originally ordained to rule over the world and transform it into the Garden-city of God, doomed all of us to death. To preserve them from deadly lawless anarchy and enable them a measure of success in ruling the earth, God permitted authoritarian government. He specifically ordered it to Eve when he said, "Your desire shall be for your husband and he will rule over you." And more generally this became the model of all human organization someone ruling over the rest.

Authoritarianism is the Model of Government designed to preserve a humanity that can be described by Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Jesus and Paul as having a hard heart, a heart of stone.¹

But preserve Humanity? Preserve it for what?

To Preserve it for . . . The coming of God Himself in the Flesh, Jesus Christ who would on the Cross not only pay for His people's sin, He would recreate them as new creatures described as being born again of the Spirit.² And finally He would send His Holy Spirit to live in them and write His law on their hearts.³

This is the end of the world as we knew it.

It is the beginning of the world as He is making it through us.

It should be common sense, but once your elbow is jogged you will be able to see throughout Scripture that the form of government appropriate for children is not the form of government appropriate for mature adults, "for those who have their powers of discernment trained by constant practice to distinguish good from evil."⁴

From the beginning God intended for His people in His Image to govern themselves by His law written on their hearts. Any and all governing to coordinate larger groups of people was to be a government that is built to foster this self-government **and therefore does not need to fear the disapproval or disagreement of any person in their society because the principle of their power source is not the power to control people against their will, but rather the manifest approval of God shining through their daily walk with His people as they "make disciples of all nations."** This is what Jesus' disciples his people to be. This is what John described when He summarizes Jesus' ministry, "And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory,

¹ Romans 2:5; Mark 8:17; Hebrews 10:16; Jeremiah 31:33 "I will put my law in your hearts and give you a heart of flesh to replace your heart of stone;" Ezekiel 36:26. "I will take away your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh;" Hebrews 7:10; Mark 10:5 "because of the hardness of your hearts;"

² John 3.

³ Hebrews 10:13-16.

⁴ Hebrews 5:14; I Corinthians 14:20; Isaiah 3:40.

glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.”⁵ And this is the “all authority in heaven and earth” which Jesus modeled for us when he said, “as the Father sent me, so send I you.”⁶ This is the only authority and power He gives all who exercise leadership in his name to walk in. There are no verses establishing an organization of leaders to certify, verify, empower, or discipline God’s people. That task is the work of the Holy Spirit speaking through the word to the congregation disciplined by the leaders in the Church.

In the 20th Century, Christians have accomplished the unthinkable. While making heart change EVERYTHING, they managed at the same time to minimize the impact of heart change reducing it down to manageable size, to a personal internal adjustment giving personal internal meaning to our lives. It has no real historical space/time significance, other than enabling us to endure the failure and hardship which the failure and ambiguity of the Gospel will inevitably bring to history. So it is no surprise that the 20th Century Christian expects God to be impotent to save the world that is why they believe that He must come and destroy it with fire and start over.⁷ There’s nothing else He can do, He lost the battle for History, for His creation.

This doomed perspective is changing as Scripture is rediscovered.

The 21st Century will be the rediscovery of what Jesus accomplished and its space/time historical impact to reconstruct the earth.

When Scripture insist on heart change, impotence is the last thing it could mean. The heart change of Scripture is to transform the earth, not to give personal peace.⁸

⁵ John 1:1-6.

⁶ Matthew 28:18; John 20:21; Acts 1:8; John 13:12-16.

⁷ This of course was the heart of Balaam’s advice to Balak. Don’t try to Get God to curse His people, just get his people to forget God’s law, and let God do the destroying for you. In effect the rapture obsession of the modern Church is the apotheosis of the Balaam strategy as God’s people agree that His law is the worst thing that could happen to government. Numbers 22. So tell me you don’t like your kids dating the midianites?

⁸ Matthew 28:19; 10:34-36.

Jesus Christ? He is someone who changes the hardest heart to flesh as Jeremiah and Ezekiel predicted in order to rule the earth as Isaiah 9 and Daniel 2 & 7 predict. This transformation of the human heart in space/time history would not be just an odd incidental of the New Covenant but would be its distinctive feature making possible the transformation of the Governments of the earth into the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ.⁹

Looking at Matthew 19, and Ephesians 5. We will pick up from the last chapter and take a closer look at how Christ reconstructs Marriage as He restores it to what God decreed in Creation. So just stop the tape and read these two chapters and we'll pick up from there.

1) In Matthew 19, Jesus' cleared the family down to the foundation He laid when he created Man, Woman and Marriage, in His Image, declaring them man and wife and defining them as One Flesh affirming what He decreed at the beginning of time;¹⁰

2) In Matthew 16, Jesus laid the foundation for human authority in the pattern of suffering service as the source of authority to rule;¹¹

3) Paul built a Garden Sanctuary Family on the spot Jesus cleared and the foundation Jesus Laid.¹²

4) The temporary patriarchal Genesis 3:16 mobile home built because of the curse is cleared away leaving the Creation Foundation bare ready to be built on by His ethically and judicially transformed New Covenant image bearers. Gone is the FEMA trailer park where for survival, the principle of their relationship is the man ruling over the woman —

Using his greater physical power to control her "I'm bigger and stronger than you! Submit like your told!"

⁹ Revelation 11:11-15; Matthew 28:19.

¹⁰ It's worth having the passage at your fingertips to check out what I'm saying. His words are radical after 2000 years of ignoring them or reading into them the exact opposite of what they say: "And Jesus said to them, "Because of your hardness of heart he wrote you this commandment. But from the beginning of creation, 'God made them male and female.' and 'Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.' So they are no longer two but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate."

¹¹ See also Luke 9:23; 22:27.

¹² Ephesians 5.

No longer does he use his economic power to control her, “I pay the bills around here! Do what I say!”

No longer does he use his God ordained power to rule over her, “God told us that I would rule over you and you would love me for it! So take off your clothes!”

No longer does he use the power Moses gave him to threaten divorce and her expulsion, “You better do what I say or you are outta here woman! So quit nagging and undermining me!”

No longer does he use the excuse that in the Church a woman should not control the man, “Paul said he does not permit a woman to rule over a man! So be silent like He said!”

No longer can a *woman* demand that the man rule over her so as to flee her responsibility as an Image bearer of God in family, church or state, “I can’t handle the pressure, you tell me what to do you’re big and strong and ordained to control me!”¹³ Codependency is not success God’s way only success for the Patriarch, it beats a nag.

Don’t get me wrong, the family ruled by the authoritarian husband was God’s rescue-lifeboat, His trailer park, and it works well enough to handle the relatively light weight of the curse. But Jesus has come. The Authoritarian government in the family simply cannot bear the weight of glory Jesus designed from the beginning to shine forth from the marriage, his foundation of Image Bearers to fulfill the earth.

¹³ It is worth noting that each item demanded by the husband is a legitimate thing for the wife to do and each has been used by many wives as her way to overcome and manipulate the authoritarian control of her husband, she is the neck turning his head so to speak. The conflict comes when they are seen in an authoritarian context to mitigate sin, instead of in the redeemed context of the husband making no demands realizing that he is unworthy of any attention from his wife and so he lays down his life for her caring for her as if he was caring for his own body — Pauline headship. And the wife realizing that she is unworthy of her husband and so loving all those things that in an authoritarian union he could command but instead from the heart doing all these “submissive” things and more, not as a floor mat but as God, her name sake, the Helper, she would care for him. They both command their body together. They are one flesh and as such rule the earth.

The transformation Jesus offers is not a mere reversal of roles or a coregency or a contract between equals. In the end you will hear Him rejecting the way of the Gentile's Rule in the Church in almost the same words he used to reject Gentile Rule in the home in Matthew 19.

All these ways of ruling over your wife and of her satisfied codependency or her dissatisfied feminist rebellion, are finished, over, done away with. Jesus laid down four ways that the curse-survival of Genesis 3:16 marriage was finished:

a) *"Because of the hardness of your heart."* That was then, this is now. Why is the power based marriage over? Because Jesus was changing their heart¹⁴ and with that change came not merely a change in the law, but a full return to the Garden Kingdom of God, from the beginning.

But He isn't finished he says more:

b) *"From the beginning it was not so,"* His reconstruction of His Garden-City Kingdom justifies the deconstruction of the temporary authoritarian order necessary to survive the curse.

And He still isn't finished! He says two more things to definitively close down that stop-gap trailer park:

c) *"Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh."*

Now, stop here. Hello, pay attention. Listen.

Jesus brings us back to marriage and the government of the home as the way He created it to be. Not the man ruling the woman. Not the woman ruling the man. Not both ruling together, or both ruling in areas of competence over the other. Or even contracting with each other. None of the above.

Once you see it you can't unsee it.

¹⁴ Ezekiel 11:19; Ezekiel 36:26; Jeremiah 31:33; Hebrews 8:10. This is not some obscure doctrine of Scripture. It is the bedrock of Jesus teaching on government, marriage and the New Covenant.

Jesus rejects “rule-over” in the sense of controlling authority or power to set policy that used to characterize a marriage. Look at what He says: that this authoritarian way of conceiving of authority in the family was *“Because of your hardness of heart.”*

Then he takes them back to His creation design: *“But from the beginning of creation, ‘God made them male and female.’”* NOT dominator and dominated. Jesus is quoting directly His own words of institution establishing them as God’s Image both male and female fully the image, fully sexually distinct.¹⁵ Neither is given authority or power over the other except as a clue the woman is called by God’s Kingly title, “Helper.”¹⁶

Then in the next breath the Word of God defines the significance of creation for marriage and family: *“Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become **one flesh**.”*

So far Jesus restates what He said on the sixth day of creation before the Sabbath crowned His work with fulfilled, enthroning rest. But when rebuking the Pharisees (and stunning His disciples) He didn’t stop there. When as God incarnate He looks on man and wife He sees **One Flesh**. Not a coregency. Not a hierarchy, not a contract governing duties. **One** — “So they are no longer two but one flesh,” the male and female the One ruler of the home.

But He’s *still* not done. True what He has just said would be more than any of us could have predicted or today what many of us are able to receive. But he does more than just smash 4,000 years of the dominion of authoritarian hearts of stone like Moses smashed the Ten Commandments. What grows when Jesus smashes our hearts of stone is not another human carved copy of the law, but a Spirit carved copy of the law of marriage written on hearts of flesh which are no longer two but One Flesh and he dares anyone to undo this act:

¹⁵ Genesis 1:26-27.

¹⁶ Just to remind you God uses that term to describe himself 17 times in the Bible. It is not applied to the woman in order to denigrate or demean her but to prefigure true leadership in the word that defined Jesus Himself, Luke 20:28 and Philippians 2.

d) *“What therefore God has joined together, let not man cast asunder!”*

Immediately we turn to questions of Divorce. Just like the apostles did, “well maybe it is better not to get married if I can’t divorce the girl!” or we ask, Can there be divorce? if so on what grounds? who adjudicates? how . . . ?

STOP! there are more ways than Divorce to divide what God has joined together. Quit thinking like the disciples! All they could think about was their own petty power. There are ways to understand the union which carves up the One flesh as surely as OJ Simpson did his wife, dividing them into Master and Servant. There are governments of men and traditions of men which worked in their day, and I respect that, but Jesus now in all finality casts these aside and as He is the Light Himself come into the world, He walks us out into Creation’s first light.

Patriarchy for its day was the best hard hearts could do in the face of the separation sin had driven between Man and Wife. Because of this division, God permitted the man to rule over her, even blessed it, even ordaining and empowering it, looking ahead to the day of redemption, the Jubilee when He would redeem all those made slaves because of their hard hearts, who could only be preserved through authoritarian governing structures, especially marriage.

1) The hierarchical union of ruler-husband over ruled-wife from The Fall to the Incarnation was restored to the True One-Flesh Unity of Creation after the Cross and Pentecost.

2) The foundation from the beginning which Jesus explicitly laid was His definition of Authority and Power. For Jesus, authority came from suffering service — “If any man be my disciple let him take up his cross and follow me.”¹⁷ The cross defines the Christian life, Christian ministry, Christian purpose, the basis of Christian Authority to rule and the substance of Christian marriage. Jesus made the suffering service of the cross the defining factor of His earthly ministry and of all authentic authority that any follower wished to claim. “The master sits at the table, but I am among you a

¹⁷ Luke 9:23; Matthew 16:24.

Servant.”¹⁸ Any other source of authority he called Satanic even if it is Peter the prince of Apostles who suggests it. “Get thou behind me Satan.”¹⁹

This service-based authority is as true in the Home as it is in the Church. Jesus is not just the prototype of the king, His definition of service applies equally to the King, the Elder, the Husband and the Wife. His law is the same for the small and great alike. The one who is to hold authority in His Kingdom is also the same: ***The one who serves, rules.***

This makes Christian rule impossible only for those whose faith is smaller than a grain of mustard. The “ye little faithers!” (ὀλιγόπιστοι) Why are you afraid to believe Jesus? He does not leave us with chaos and anarchy or the false hope of egalitarianism, but with His Holy Spirit and His revealed Word. His is the only foundation firm enough not to crack under the weight of Glory God has prepared for His people.²⁰

3) On this Creation foundation of One-Flesh, and authority through service, Paul builds the Sanctuary Home ruled over by One Man-Wife Flesh who rule the home. Listen to how Paul builds:²¹

¹⁸ Luke 22:27

¹⁹ Matthew 16:21-22, 23-24.

²⁰ II Corinthians 4:17; I Corinthians 2:9.

²¹ Again it is worth putting the words of God down to reflect on them: Ephesians 5:22-33. Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the church, his body, and is himself its Savior. Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit in everything to their husbands.

25 Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, 26 that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, 27 so that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish. 28 In the same way husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. 29 For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ does the church, 30 because we are members of his body. 31 “Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.” 32 This mystery is profound, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church. 33 However, let each one of you love his wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband.

The Christian governance of the home is built around the same foundation of the Church: submission to one another. Paul reflecting directly on the words of Christ: “The master sits at the table, but I am among you as a servant.” therefore makes submission the context of all authority in the Church, not just in a marriage. Paul rejects leaders as those with the power to set policy, police it or control God’s people.

Watch the Sanctuary-Home Paul builds grow:

General mutual submission is the mark of the Church
“submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.”

Applying this to the wife he says, “Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord.” For the Christian, “as to the Lord” doesn’t mean “do whatever he says.” It means your submission is in all ways reflective of your husband’s reflection of Jesus Christ which was as a servant laying down his life, not as the master making demands at the table to someone else to go lay down their life for him.

At first to childish eyes filled with authoritarian lording it over of each other, it sounds like Paul is establishing the God-like ability of the man to decree over his wife. We forget what Jesus said about his relationship to the Church and replace Jesus with the tried and true gentile model — the one in charge sets policy, controls the one not in charge. The one not in charge submits. But that is clearly not why Paul brings up Jesus’ headship for the husband. “For the husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the church his body. . . .”

“Headship” can mean many things, but they are irrelevant to argue about because what Paul means by headship is clear, the husband is like Christ in Christ’s headship. He is not like Christ in every possible meaning of the word “head” or even the meanings that would fit our various ideals and ideas.

What Paul has in mind here, based on his words to the Ephesians, is not a theory of who is in charge, who directs the body, who sets policy for the body — though all of those things are possible implications of “headship”. For Jesus, being the head **saves** the body! Headship means you are the daily rescuer of the body. “The husband is the head of the wife even

as Christ is the head of the church his body,” Which means that headship makes him the savior, as the next words declare “***and is himself its Savior.***” Salvation represented in the husband acting like Jesus toward his wife is the basis of the wife’s submission. It is a direct application of, “If any man would be my disciple let him take up his Cross and follow Me.” To be Christ’s disciple in marriage is to take up your cross, and lay down your life for your wife. Not his ability to control her or make her answer to him, or his superior physical, or economic, or even intellectual strength (whether he possesses any of these things or not is irrelevant to life in Christ, or to life in Christian marriage. Any man small or great needs none of those superiorities to love his wife. Any man can lay down his life for his wife, however inferior he or she might be in any respect.) “Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit in everything to their husbands.”

The wife’s submission is based on the salvation of Christ exhibited in her husband’s representation of it. That is headship, not the master’s ability to command, control and discipline. The ability to serve. It is in every husband’s reach except those who replace the rule of Christ for the rule of a pagan monarch, the so called patriarch.

Just in case you missed this, listen to what Paul says to the Husband:

First, there is not one word of directing, controlling or setting policy for the wife. First comes Love, “Husbands, love your wives,” not just any way you want to define it, but through sacrificial service because the love is “as Christ loved the church.”

Second, Paul does not leave “love of Christ” to just anything we want love to mean or suggestions that sometimes tough love is called for to get wife in line as if she were his child. Oh, what if she **is** out of line you ask? Not an unreasonable question. Wives sin. So what did Jesus do while we were yet sinners? It is the sort of love that causes you and Christ to give yourselves up “for her, that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, so that He might present the church to Himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish.” This is how the cross handles a breach of order and sin in the wife, not controlling

police, not schedules, not house cams to check up on her progress.

There is not a word here of control, or discipline even as in Christ the central analogy to His power over all things is His service.²² The purpose of the “giving himself up” is not to tell her what to do, or take charge of the discipline of her holiness. If anything the analogy is to bathing with her, scrubbing her back, being sure it was the best bath she ever had.

Third, Paul, following Jesus’ Matthew 19 lead, describes the end of the authoritarian marriage. *Paul comes back to the One-Flesh the 2nd Person of the Trinity spoke of at Creation and then a second time Jesus repeated to the Pharisees what He had said. So Paul says echoing Jesus, “In the same way husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. [echo One-Flesh] He who loves his wife loves himself [echo One-Flesh]. For no one ever hated his own flesh, [echo One-Flesh] but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ does the church,”* Just like Christ does the church. This is lying cuddled up in bed sharing about the events of the day murmuring encouragement to each other. This is not making a list, checking it twice being sure that your wife got her chores done. Paul concludes, **“because we are members of his body.”** [echo One-Flesh]

Finally, Paul concludes pulling all of his “One Flesh” allusions together with the words of Jesus at Creation and at the reinstitution of the recreated order: **“Therefore, a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.”**

The words of Jesus, in His institution of the creation order, and the same words repeated at the Reconstruction of the Created order followed by the commentary on those words by Paul make clear that “One-Flesh” is not a hierarchy, or coregency, but rather is **both** the basic Government of Dominion **and** its central task.

Like the central task of those who rule in the Church is discipleship, the central task of One-Flesh is to as quickly as possible disciple those in their care to full independent adult spiritual, self-governing maturity.

²² Philippians 2:4-12.

This isn't his job, this isn't her job, this is not their job together as co-rulers.

They are One-flesh. They bear God's Image. The world has changed. Christmas has happened.

Jesus Christ is ordaining far more than a more compassionate hierarchy.

Jesus Christ reestablishes Creation in the family and ends the long night of authoritarian government in Marriage.

What God has joined let not the tradition of men break asunder who long for the days when the curse ruled our hearts of stone and men were men and ruled their women well.